



CONNECTICUT LEGAL SERVICES

A PRIVATE NONPROFIT CORPORATION

16 MAIN STREET NEW BRITAIN, CT 06051

TELEPHONE (860) 225-8678

FAX (860) 225-6105

E-MAIL NEWBRITAIN@CONNLEGALSERVICES.ORG

February 16, 2017

JOANNE LEWIS
MANAGING ATTORNEY
OFFICE

KRISTEN NOELLE HATCHER
MANAGING ATTORNEY
BENEFITS UNIT
NILDA R. HAVRILLA
MANAGING ATTORNEY
HOUSING UNIT
AGATA RASZCZYK-LAWSKA
MANAGING ATTORNEY
CHILDREN AT RISK UNIT
JOHN P. SPILKA
MANAGING ATTORNEY
DISABILITY (SSI) UNIT

NEIL L. BROCKWEHL
MICHAEL BURNS
MYKLYN MAHONEY
RANDI FAITH MEZZY
RAPHAEL L. PODOLSKY
MARTIN WHEELER
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

MARIA HUERTAS
LORELEI WEAVER
LEGAL ASSISTANTS

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
62 WASHINGTON STREET
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457
(860) 344-0447

KEVIN J. RASCH
BOARD CHAIR

STEVEN D. EPPLER-EPSTEIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LAW OFFICES
211 STATE STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604

16 MAIN STREET
NEW BRITAIN, CT 06051

153 WILLIAMS STREET
NEW LONDON, CT 06320

20 SUMMER STREET
STAMFORD, CT 06901

85 CENTRAL AVENUE
WATERBURY, CT 06702

872 MAIN STREET
WILLIMANTIC, CT 06226

SATELLITE OFFICES

5 COLONY STREET
MERIDEN, CT 06451

98 SOUTH MAIN STREET
NORWALK, CT 06854

29 NAEK ROAD, SUITE 5A
VERNON, CT 06066

TESTIMONY OF KRISTEN NOELLE HATCHER BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE IN OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED CUT TO HUSKY A PARENTS IN THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

Good evening, my name is Kristen Noelle Hatcher. I am an attorney at Connecticut Legal Services, Inc., a non-profit civil law firm dedicated to helping low-income people access justice. I manage our Public Benefits unit. I am testifying today on behalf of our clients and the many other low-income residents of this state to oppose the cut to HUSKY A parents.

The governor's budget proposes a reduction in HUSKY A eligibility for adults from 155 percent of the FPL (\$38,272 for a family of 4) to 138 percent of the FPL (\$33,600 for a family of 4). This reduction would eliminate coverage for approximately 9,500 low income parents. Connecticut has been a leader in healthcare- our Medicaid program is highly regarded nationally as a great model. We have done well improving quality while controlling our costs. The governor's proposal to reduce eligibility is a threat to this success.

When HUSKY A eligibility was reduced in 2015, it was assumed parents who were not eligible under another category of HUSKY (Medicaid) would secure subsidized coverage through the exchange. Only about 3,100 of the 18,900 parents who lost Medicaid coverage secured subsidized coverage through the exchange-only 16 percent¹. Parents in the 2015 cuts had higher incomes, that reduction lowered the eligibility level from 201 percent of the FPL to 155 percent of the FPL. Since this proposed cut would impact people with even lower incomes, and we learned that cost was a key reason that many of those previously cut did not purchase coverage on the exchange, it seems unlikely that these low participation numbers would improve, and most likely they will be even worse for this group.² There are several reasons why this is troubling and why we should be concerned. Keeping parents covered:

- Builds a **healthy workforce for Connecticut** by providing access to preventive and comprehensive health care;
- Enhances **financial security** by protecting people from the catastrophic costs of serious illness and diseases;
- Results in **earlier diagnosis and treatment** of serious health conditions, such as diabetes.

Perhaps most important, children will lose HUSKY coverage and access if their parents do. Roll-backs in coverage for parents in other states resulted in eligible children losing coverage as well. Studies show that more children are covered by health insurance and get the care they need when their parents are covered also.³

Please reject the proposed cut in the governor's budget and maintain eligibility levels for HUSKY A parents at 155 percent of the FPL. Thank you for your time.

¹ See, https://www.cga.ct.gov/med/council/2016/1209/20161209ATTACH_HUSKY%20A%20Transitions%20Presentation.pdf

² See, *How Proposed HUSKY Cuts Will Harm Low-Income Families*, available at www.cthealth.org

³ *Id.*